

REMARKS

Claims 10 to 20 were presented for examination in the present application. The instant amendment adds new Claim 21 and, thus, Claims 10 to 21 are presented for consideration upon entry of the instant amendment. Support for new claim 21 can be found in the specification at least at page 6, line 22 through page 7, line 9.

It is proposed to amend Figure 1 as indicated in red. It is respectfully submitted that the amendments proposed to Figure 1 are made to better conform this figure and the specification to one another. Upon approval of the proposed changes, Applicants will submit revised formal drawings, which include the approved changes.

It is respectfully submitted that the amendments to the specification have been made to conform the specification to the figures. Specifically, the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 18 has been amended to include the "arrow 6" element illustrated in Figure 1. The paragraph beginning at page 7, line 1 has been amended to change the reference number for the "sealing plate" element from "3.1" to "3.3". Additionally, the paragraph beginning at page 8, line 15 has been amended to change "sealing" to the correct "filter".

Claims 10 to 12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Specifically, the Office Action asserts that there is insufficient basis for "the rod ends" element recited in paragraphs 1 and 2 of claim 10. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The preamble of claim 10 requires, in part, "at least one ceramic filter element with rod ends". It is respectfully submitted that the "rod ends" element recited in paragraphs 1 and

2 of claim 10 are referring back to the element introduced in the preamble. Accordingly, claim 10 is believed to meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is therefore requested.

Claims 10 to 20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,849,104 to Garcera et al. (Garcera). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claim 10 provides, in part, attaching the inner opening of the blank seal to a holder; forming a finished seal by processing the outer surface of the blank seal attached to the holder; and attaching the finished seal to at least one of the rod ends. Thus, claim 10 clearly provides for attaching the blank seal to a holder, forming the finished seal while the blank seal is on the holder, and then attaching the finished seal to the rod end. It is respectfully submitted that Garcera simply does not disclose or suggest the claimed process.

The Office Action asserts that the rod itself of Garcera is the "holder" of claim 10. However, it is submitted that Garcera fails to teach the use of a holder, which is not the filter element. Rather, Garcera teaches at least at column 5, line 63 through column 6, line 8 that:

"The blank is fitted over the imperfect end of the element 1 by slightly stretching the elastomer. Because of its elasticity, the blank grips this end perfectly and a good seal is obtained between the blank and the separator element 1. On the other hand, the geometrical defects of the outside surface of the element 1 are transferred to the outside shape of the blank which cannot, of course, coincide with the frustoconical housings 40 and 41. This outside shape is then altered by machining, grinding, turning, localized melting, laser cutting or high-pressure liquid jet cutting, or any other appropriate process, so as to confer

on the surface of the blank precisely defined geometrical shapes corresponding to those of the housings 40 and 41."

Thus, it is submitted that Garcera teaches altering the outside shape of the blank while the blank is stretched over the element. Garcera simply neither discloses nor suggests a holder as in the claimed method. Clearly, the blank having its outside shape altered while stretched over the blank of Garcera does not disclose or suggest the blank that is formed into a finished seal while the blank seal is on the holder, and is then subsequently attached to the rod end as in claim 10. Accordingly, claim 10 is in condition for allowance.

Since claims 11 to 12 depend from claim 10, they are also in condition for allowance for at least the same reasons discussed above with respect to claim 10.

Claim 13 provides, in part, attaching the inner opening of the blank seal to a holder; forming a finished seal by processing an outer surface of the blank seal attached to the holder; and attaching the finished seal to the rod end.

Again, Garcera teaches altering the outside shape of the blank while the blank is stretched over the element. Clearly, the blank having its outside shape altered while stretched over the blank of Garcera does not disclose or suggest the blank that is formed into a finished seal while the blank seal is on the holder, and is then subsequently attached to the rod end as in claim 13.

Accordingly, claim 13 is patentable over the cited reference. Since claims 14 to 20 depend from claim 13, they are also patentable over the cited reference and, thus, in condition for allowance.

For the reasons set forth above, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

It is believed that new claim 21 is also in a condition for allowance. For example, the method of claim 21 provides, in part, attaching the blank seal to a dummy holder, processing the outer surface of the blank seal while attached to the dummy holder, removing the seal from the dummy holder, and attaching it to the ceramic filter element.

Again, Garcera teaches altering the outside shape of the blank while the blank is stretched over the element. Since the blank of Garcera is stretched over the element before having its outside shape altered, the blank of Garcera is simply not removed from the element after being processed. Thus, Garcera teaches away from the method of claim 21, which requires removing the seal from the dummy holder after it has been processed. Accordingly, claim 21 is clearly patentable over the cited reference.

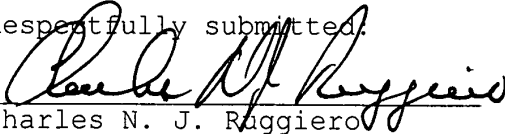
Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the specification. The attached page is captioned "Version With Markings to Show Changes Made".

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. Such action is most earnestly solicited. If for any reason the Examiner feels that consultation with Applicants' attorney would be helpful in the advancement of the prosecution, the Examiner is invited to call Applicants' attorney.

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Respectfully submitted,



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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 18 as follows:

The so-called permeate--arrow 7--enters into space 8, which surrounds filter elements 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and exits again from the main part 2.1 of housing 2 through the outlets 2.1.2, 2.1.3 at arrow 6.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 1 as follows:

First, a blank of plate [3.1] 3.3 is produced, for example, by casting. The blank is then provided with the named openings. The plate is now attached onto rod-shaped holders (dummies). These dummies have outer diameters that correspond to an average diameter of all filter elements 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3, thus to a statistical mean value. The sealing plate [3.1] 3.3 is processed on the outside, for example, by turning on a lathe. In this way, the nominal size is produced. Then sealing plate [3.1] 3.3 is removed from the dummy and attached to a standard filter element. The outer dimension of sealing plate [3.1] 3.3 is thus not changed at all or is changed only slightly, so that practically there is no deviation from the nominal outer size.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 8, line 15 as follows:

The [sealing] filter element 1.1 shown in Figure 6 has a smaller dimension in its terminal region in comparison with its main part, so that a collar 1.6 is present.